

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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For Immediate Release December 14, 2007

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Patrick Administration Completes Fishing and Boating Projects in 16 Communities During 2007

Bay State Anglers Reap Benefits of New and Refurbished Fishing Areas, Boat Ramps, and Piers

BOSTON - Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles and Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Commissioner Mary Griffin today announced the completion of boating and fishing access projects in 16 cities and towns. Completed during 2007, the projects include repair and new construction of boat ramps, handicapped-accessible sport fishing piers and platforms, parking lots, and shore fishing areas overseen by DFG's Office of Fishing and Boating Access.

"I am pleased to announce these projects, which are extremely valuable to and popular with the hundreds of thousands of people who enjoy recreational boating and fishing throughout the Commonwealth," Secretary Bowles said.

"Almost all of these projects involve partnerships with cities and towns or government agencies such as the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and we are grateful to these partners for making our funds go further in providing better access to the state's coastal and inland waters," said Commissioner Griffin.

The Office of Fishing and Boating Access provides entry points to more than 1,200 miles of seashore and hundreds of great ponds, rivers and streams across Massachusetts. The agency oversees boat and canoe launch sites and fishing piers at 258 coastal and inland locations, giving residents and visitors extensive opportunities to enjoy fishing, canoeing, sailing, waterskiing, and recreational boating.

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DFG's Office of Fishing and Boating Access projects were completed in the following locations:

Southeastern Massachusetts

Falmouth, Megansett Harbor. Completed: November 2007. Cost: \$85,000. Reconstruction of an existing town boat ramp with trailer parking available in the spring and fall; provides access to Buzzards Bay. The site is managed by the town of Falmouth.

Rochester, Mary's Pond. Completed: summer of 2007. Cost: \$70,000. New car-top boat access facility is on a stocked trout pond managed by the town of Rochester.

East Bridgewater, Satucket River (Robbins Pond). Completed: spring of 2007. Cost: \$30,000.

New car-top boat access facility on Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (DFW) property managed by the town of East Bridgewater.

Bridgewater, Town River. Completed: spring of 2007. Cost: \$15,000. New canoe access facility on town property managed by the town of Bridgewater.

Metro/Northeastern Massachusetts

Haverhill, Merrimack River. Completed: fall of 2007. Cost: \$6,000. Reconstruction of an existing city boat ramp by the Haverhill Department of Public Works. The Office of Fishing and Boating Access supplied materials. The site is managed by the city of Haverhill.

Weymouth, Whitman Pond. Completed: summer of 2007. Cost: \$6,000. Reconstruction of a town boat ramp and shore fishing area and the addition of a handicapped-accessible shore fishing platform with a gravel path leading to the platform. The Weymouth Department of Public Works completed the construction with materials provided by the Office of Fishing and Boating Access. The site is managed by the town of Weymouth.

Danvers, Porter River (Pope's Landing). Completed: spring of 2007. Cost: \$8,000. Repairs to piles and dock system. The existing boat ramp provides access to Beverly harbor and marine waters of the North Shore. The site is managed by the town of Danvers.

Ashland, Sudbury River. Completed: spring of 2007. Cost: \$10,000.

Two new canoe access sites were constructed on the river to provide put-in and take-out points for canoe and kayak users. Sites are on municipal property and managed by the town of Ashland.

Newburyport, Merrimack River (Cashman Park). Completed: spring of 2007. Cost: \$3,000.

Float system repairs were completed at the facility, which is the busiest boat access site in the state. It is located on Newburyport property and managed by the city.

Central Massachusetts

Webster, Webster Lake. Completed: summer of 2007. Cost: \$2,000.

Repairs and extension to an existing boat ramp. The site is managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

Charlton, Buffumville Reservoir. Completed: fall of 2007. Cost: \$6,000. New boat ramp constructed with assistance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) on USACOE property.

Ware, Ware River. Completed: summer of 2007. Cost: \$8,000.

A new floats system was installed at docks to make it easier to launch and retrieve boats at the existing boat ramp. Site is managed by the town of Ware.

Western Massachusetts

New Marlborough, York Lake. Completed: spring of 2007. Cost: \$71,000. Reconstruction of a small boat ramp and construction of a new parking lot in Sandisfield State Forest, which is managed by the DCR.

Gill, Connecticut River. Completed: fall of 2007 at no cost to the state.

Minor repairs to the float system at the docks were done by the contractor at no cost to the agency, following original work at this site last year. The site's boat ramp is on DFG land and provides access to the Connecticut River. The site is managed by the DCR.

Southwick, Congamond Lakes. Completed: spring of 2007. Cost: \$10,000. Miscellaneous work to the handicapped-accessible sport fishing pier, sidewalks and building. A boat ramp at this site provides boating access to the Congamond Lakes. The site is on DFG land and managed by the Town of Southwick.

Belchertown, Swift River. Completed: summer of 2007. Cost: \$2,000. Parking lot repairs were done at this site, which has a small boat ramp to provide anglers with access to excellent trout and bass fishing opportunities in the Swift River. The property is owned and managed by the DFW.

The DFG's Office of Fishing and Boating Access (OFBA) manages construction, repair, and operation of state boat ramps, canoe and car-top launch sites, parking areas, and approach roads. The Office oversees facility design and construction, which is usually carried out by private contractors or municipal public works departments. Agency funds are also used to construct handicapped-accessible sport fishing piers and to purchase and improve shoreline fishing areas.

Most state boat ramps are open free-of-charge to the general public, except in some heavily-used sites authorized by the DFG to collect user fees to recover costs of site maintenance and daily management. Sites that collect fees must charge all users the same amount, and facilities must be open to the boating public on equal terms. Unlike these OFBA sites, other boating facilities acquired and constructed entirely with municipal funds may charge higher fees to out-of-town users or restrict usage to town residents.

Appropriations for site acquisition, construction, and maintenance activities of the OFBA come from several sources, including state general funds, bond appropriations, and federal reimbursements from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service under the federal Sport Fish Restoration Act.

For a table of information about the individual access locations, maps, and fisheries, see: http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/pab/pab_facilities.htm.

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